Put On in Spanish: Ponerse vs Vestirse vs Poner

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Quick answer: "To put on" (clothes, shoes, makeup) in Spanish is **ponerse**: *Me pongo la chaqueta* – "I put on my jacket." "To get dressed" is **vestirse**: *Me visto rápido* – "I get dressed quickly." Plain "to put" (place something somewhere) is **poner**: *Pon las llaves en la mesa* – "Put the keys on the table."

All three are everyday verbs, and the small reflexive "se" changes their meaning. Here's exactly when to use each one, with conjugation charts, the phrases you need for clothes, and a quick quiz.

Put / put on in Spanish: the short version

English	Spanish	Example
to put (place)	**poner**	*Puse el libro en la mochila.* – I put the book in the backpack.
to put on (clothes)	**ponerse**	*Ponte los zapatos.* – Put your shoes on.
to get dressed	**vestirse**	*Los niños se visten solos.* – The kids get dressed by themselves.
to dress (someone else)	**vestir**	*Visto a mi hija.* – I dress my daughter.
to take off (clothes)	**quitarse**	*Quítate el abrigo.* – Take off your coat.
to try on	**probarse**	*¿Me puedo probar esta camisa?* – Can I try on this shirt?
to wear / be wearing	**llevar (puesto)**	*Lleva gafas.* – He's wearing glasses.

Poner: to put, to place

Poner is one of the most useful verbs in Spanish. Besides "to put," it means:

- **To turn on:** *Pon la tele / la música.* – Turn on the TV / the music.
- **To set the table:** *Pon la mesa, por favor.*
- **To name:** *Le pusieron Sofía.* – They named her Sofía.

Poner is irregular: *pongo* (I put), *puse* (I put, past). For every tense, see the full poner conjugation guide.

Ponerse: to put on (and to become)

Add the reflexive pronoun and **poner** becomes **ponerse**, "to put something on yourself." Spanish uses the article (*el, la, los*), not "my/your," because the reflexive pronoun already shows whose it is:

*Me pongo **los** zapatos.* – I put on **my** shoes. (not × *mis zapatos*)

Pronoun	Present	Preterite (past)
yo	me pongo	me puse
tú	te pones	te pusiste
él / ella / usted	se pone	se puso
nosotros	nos ponemos	nos pusimos
vosotros	os ponéis	os pusisteis
ellos / ustedes	se ponen	se pusieron

Ponerse + adjective = to become / to get

With emotions and temporary states, ponerse means "to get" or "to become":

- *Se puso nervioso.* – He got nervous.
- *Me pongo triste cuando llueve.* – I get sad when it rains.
- *Te pusiste rojo.* – You turned red.

Learn more feelings in emotions in Spanish.

Vestirse: to get dressed

Vestirse describes the whole action of getting dressed, without naming a specific item. It's a stem-changing verb (e → i):

Pronoun	Present	Preterite (past)
yo	me visto	me vestí
tú	te vistes	te vestiste
él / ella / usted	se viste	se vistió
nosotros	nos vestimos	nos vestimos
vosotros	os vestís	os vestisteis
ellos / ustedes	se visten	se vistieron

- *Me visto y salgo.* – I get dressed and head out.
- *Se viste muy elegante.* – She dresses very elegantly.
- *Vestirse de* = to dress as / in: *Se vistió de pirata.* – He dressed up as a pirate.

Full conjugations and practice: **vestirse conjugation**.

Ponerse vs vestirse: which one?

	Ponerse	Vestirse
Meaning	To put on a specific item	To get dressed (in general)
Needs an object?	Yes: *me pongo* ***la gorra***	No: *me visto*
Example	*Ponte el suéter, hace frío.*	*Vístete, ya nos vamos.*

Commands: “Put it on!”

	tú	usted	negative (tú)
poner	pon	ponga	no pongas
ponerse	ponte	póngase	no te pongas
vestirse	vístete	vístase	no te vistas
quitarse	quítate	quítese	no te quites

Add an object pronoun to the end: *¡Póntelo!* – Put it on! *¡Quítatelo!* – Take it off! More in our guide to Spanish commands.

Clothes vocabulary to practice with

la camisa (shirt), *la camiseta* (T-shirt), *los pantalones* (pants), *la falda* (skirt), *el vestido* (dress), *la chaqueta* (jacket), *el abrigo* (coat), *el suéter* (sweater), *los zapatos* (shoes), *los calcetines* (socks), *la gorra* (cap), *el cinturón* (belt), *las gafas / los lentes* (glasses).

Common mistakes

- **× Me pongo mi chaqueta → ✓ Me pongo la chaqueta.** Use the article, not the possessive.
- **× Me visto la camisa → ✓ Me pongo la camisa.** Vestirse doesn’t take a clothing item.
- **× Yo pono → ✓ Yo pongo.** × *poní* → ✓ *puse*.
- **× Se vestió → ✓ Se vistió.** The e → i change also shows up in the past.

Quick quiz

1. Hace frío. _____ (tú, ponerse) el abrigo.
2. Yo _____ (vestirse) en cinco minutos.
3. Ayer ella _____ (ponerse) muy nerviosa.
4. ¿Dónde _____ (tú, poner) mis llaves?
5. Los niños ya _____ (vestirse) para la escuela. (past)

▶ **Show answers**

Frequently asked questions

How do you say “put on” in Spanish?

Ponerse : me pongo, te pones, se pone… For example, Me pongo los lentes – I put on my glasses.

What is the difference between poner and ponerse?

Poner = to put something somewhere. Ponerse = to put something on yourself, or to become (ponerse feliz).

How do you say “get dressed” in Spanish?

Vestirse : Me visto – I get dressed. ¡Vístete! – Get dressed!

How do you say “to wear” in Spanish?

Llevar or llevar puesto : Lleva una gorra – He’s wearing a cap. See traer vs llevar for other uses of llevar.

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